

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR"

All THE YEAR ROUND

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A SERIAL STORY BY THE AUTHOR OF "BLACK SHEEP."

BOOK III.

CHAPTER X. LADY CAROLINE ADVISES ON A DELICATE SUBJECT.

THE communication which Mr. Benthall, in his bluff off-hand manner, had made to Walter Joyce, had surprised the latter very much, and embarrassed him not a little. Ever since the receipt of Marian Ashurst's letter announcing her intention of marrying Mr. Creswell, Joyce had lived absolutely free from any influence of "the cruel madness of love, the poison of honey flowers, and all the measureless ill." All his thoughts had been given up to labour and ambition, and, with the exception of his deep-rooted and genuine regard for Lady Caroline, and his friendly liking for the Creswell girls, he entertained no feeling for any woman living, unless a suspicion of and an aversion to Marian Creswell might be so taken into account. Had he this special partiality for Maud Creswell, of which Benthall had spoken so plainly? He set to work to catechise himself, to look back through the events of the past few months, noting what he remembered of their relations to each other.

Yes, he had seen a great deal of Maud; he remembered very frequent occasions on which they had been thrown together. He had not noticed it at the time; it seemed to come naturally enough. Gertrude, of course, was engaged with Benthall when he was in town, in writing to him or thinking of him when he was away, and Lady Caroline had to go through all the hard work which falls upon a great lady in society, work the amount of which can only be appreciated by those who have per-

formed it or seen it performed. So that, as Joyce then recollects, he and Maud had been thrown a great deal together, and, as he further recollects, they had had a great many discussions on topics very far removed from the mere ordinary frivolity of society-talk; and he had noticed that she seemed to have clear ideas, which she understood how to express. What an odd thing, that what Benthall said had never struck him before! It must have been patent to other people, though; and that put the matter, unpleasantly, in rather a ridiculous light. After all, though, what was there ridiculous in it? Maud was a very handsome girl, a clever girl, and an unmistakable lady. What a pretty, slight, girlish figure she had! such a graceful outline! her head was so well posed upon her neck! And Joyce smiled as he found himself drawing lines in the air with the paper-knife which he was idly tossing in his hand.

And he had Benthall's assurance that the girl cared for him; that was something. Benthall was a man careful in the extreme as to what he said, and he would not have made such a statement where a girl was concerned, and that girl his own sister-in-law, unless he were tolerably certain of being right. His own sister-in-law; he had it then, of course, from Gertrude, who was Maud's second self, and would know all about it. It was satisfactory to know that there was a woman in the world who cared for him, and though without the smallest particle of vanity he accepted the belief very readily, for his rejection by Marian Ashurst and the indignity which he had suffered at her hands had by no means rendered him generally cynical or suspicious of the sex. Marian Ashurst! what an age ago it seemed since the days

when the mention of that name would have sent the blood flowing to his cheek, and his heart thumping audibly, and now here he was staying in the old house where all the love scenes had taken place, walking round the garden where all the soft words had been spoken, all the vows made which she had thrown to the winds, when the last parting, with what he then, and for so long afterwards, thought its never-to-be-forgotten agony had occurred, and he had not felt one single extra palpitation. Mrs. Creswell was staying away from Woolgreaves just then, at some inland watering-place; for the benefit of her health, which it was said had suffered somewhat from her constant attendance on her husband, or Joyce might have met her. Such a meeting would not have caused him an emotion. When he had encountered her in the lane, during the canvassing time, there was yet lingering within his breast a remembrance of the great wrong she had done him, and that was fanned into additional fury by the nature of her request and the insolence with which she made it. But all those feelings had died out now, and were he then, he thought, to come across Marian Creswell's path, she would be to him as the merest stranger, and no more.

If he were to marry, he knew of no one more likely to suit him in all ways than Maud. Pretty to look at, clever to talk to, sufficiently accustomed to him and his ways of life, she would make him a far better wife than nine-tenths of the young ladies he was accustomed to meet in such little society as he could spare the time to cultivate. Why should he marry at all? He answered the question almost as soon as he asked it. His life wanted brightening, wanted refining, was at present too narrow and confined; all his hopes, thoughts, and aspirations were centred on himself. He was all wrong. There should be some one who—the chambers were confoundedly dreary too, when he came home to them from the office or the House; he should travel when the House rose, somewhere abroad, he thought, and it would be dull work moving about by himself, and—

What pretty, earnest eyes Maud had, and shining hair, and delicate "bred" looking hands! She certainly was wonderfully nice, and if, as Benthall avowed, she really cared for him, he—who was this coming to break in on his pleasant day-dream? Oh, Gertrude.

"I was wondering where you were, Mr. Joyce! You said you wanted your

holiday, and you seem to be passing it in slumber!"

"Nothing so commonplace, Mrs. Benthall—"

"One moment, why do you call me Mrs. Benthall? What has made you so formal and ridiculous all of a sudden? You used to call me Gertrude, in London?"

"Yes, but then you were an unmarried girl, now you are a wedded woman, and there's a certain amount of respect due to matronhood."

"What nonsense! Do call me Gertrude again, please, Mrs. Benthall sounds so horrid! I should like the boarders here in the house to call me Gertrude, only George says it wouldn't be proper! And so you weren't asleep?"

"Not the least bit! Although I'm ready to allow I was dreaming."

"Dreaming! what about?"

"About the old days which I spent in this place—and their association!"

"Oh yes, I know—I mean to say—"

"No, no, Gertrude, say what you had on your lips then! No prevarication and no hesitation; what was it?"

"No, really, nothing—it is only—"

"I insist!"

"Well, what I mean to say is, of course people will talk in a village, you know, and we've heard about your engagement, you know, and how it was broken off, and how badly you were treated, and— Oh, how silly I was to say a word about it! I'm sure George would be horribly cross if he knew!"

"And did you imagine I was grizzling over my past, cursing the day when I first saw the faithless fair, and indulging in other poetic rhapsodies! My dear Gertrude, it's not a pleasant thing being jilted, but one lives to get over it and forget all about it; even to forgive her whom I believe it is correct to call the false one!"

"Yes, I dare say! In fact George and Maud both said you didn't think anything about it now, and—"

"Maud! did she know of it too?"

"Oh yes, we all knew of it! The old woman who had been housekeeper, or cook, or something here in the old Ashursts' time told George, and—"

"What did Maud say about it?" interrupted Joyce.

"She said—I forget what! No! I recollect! she said that—that Mrs. Creswell was just the sort of woman that would fail to appreciate you!"

"That may be taken in two senses, as

a compliment or otherwise," said Joyce, laughing.

"I'm sure Maud meant it nicely," said Gertrude, earnestly. Then added, "By the way, I wanted to talk to you about Maud, Mr. Joyce."

"About Maud!" said Walter. Then thought to himself, "Is it possible that the seeds of match-making are already developing themselves in this three months' old matron?"

"Yes. I don't think George mentioned it to you, but he had a talk with Maud, just before our marriage, about her future. George, of course, told her that our house would be her home, her permanent home I mean; and he gave her the kindest message from Lady Caroline, who bargained that at least a portion of the year should be spent with her."

"What did your sister say to that?"

"Well, she was much obliged and all that, but she did not seem inclined to settle down. She has some horrible notions about duty and that sort of thing, and thinks her money has been given to her to do good with; and George is afraid she would get, what he calls, 'let in' by some of those dreadful hypocritical people, and we want you to talk to her and reason her out of it."

"I? Why I, my dear Gertrude?"

"Because she believes in you so much more than in anybody else, and is so much more likely to do what you advise her."

"She pays me a great compliment," said Joyce, rising, "and I'll see what's to be done. The first thing, I think, is to consult Lady Caroline, who would be sure to give good advice. I shall see her to-morrow, and I'll—"

"See Lady Caroline to-morrow! I thought you were not going back till Saturday?"

"I've just thought of some special business about which I must see Lady Caroline at once, and I'll mention this at the same time. Now, let us find George. Come for a turn."

They found George and went for their turn, and when their turn was over, and Gertrude was alone with her husband, she told him the conversation which she had had with Walter Joyce. The schoolmaster laughed heartily.

"Pon my word, Gerty," he said, "match-making appears to be your forte, born and bred in you! I never believed in the reality of those old dowagers in Mrs. Trollope's novels, until I saw you."

"Well, I declare, George, you are complimentary! old dowagers, indeed! But, seriously, I wish Walter wasn't going to Lady Caroline!"

"Why, what on earth has that to do with it?"

"Well, I mean speaking in Maud's interest!"

"Why, one would think that Lady Caroline was in love with Walter Joyce herself!"

"Exactly!"

"Why—why—you don't think so, my dear?"

"I'm sure so, my dear!"

And, as response, the Reverend George Benthall whistled in a loud and unclerical manner.

When Walter Joyce arrived in Chesterfield-street, he found Lady Caroline was absent, passing the holidays with Lord and Lady Hetherington at Westhope, and, after a little hesitation, he determined to go down there and see her. He had not seen anything of the Hetheringtons since his election: his lordship was occupied with some new fad which kept him in the country, and her ladyship did not care to come to town until after Easter. Lord Hetherington had viewed the progress of his ex-secretary with great satisfaction. His recollections of Joyce were all pleasant; the young man had done his work carefully and cleverly, had always been gentlemanly and unobtrusive, and had behaved deuced well—point of fact, deuced well, brave, and all that kind of thing, in that matter of saving Carline on the ice. Her ladyship's feelings were very different. She disliked self-made people more than any others, and those who were reckoned clever were specially obnoxious to her. She had heard much, a great deal too much, of Joyce from Mr. Gould, who, in his occasional visits, delighted in dilating on his recent foeman's abilities, eloquence, and pluck, partly because he respected such qualities wherever he met with them, but principally because he knew that such comments were very aggravating to Lady Hetherington (no great favourite of his); and she was not more favourably disposed towards him, because he had adopted political principles diametrically opposed to those in which she believed. But what actuated her most in her ill-feeling towards Mr. Joyce was a fear that, now that he had obtained a certain position, he might aspire to Lady Caroline Mansergh, who, as Lady

Hetherington always suspected, would be by no means indisposed to accept him. Hitherto the difference in their social status had rendered any such proceeding thoroughly unlikely; a tutor, or a, what did they call it?—reporter to a newspaper, could scarcely have the impertinence to propose for an earl's sister; but, as a member of parliament, the man enjoyed a position in society, and nothing could be said against him on that score. There was Lady Violet Magnier, Lord Haughton-forest's daughter. Well, Mr. Magnier sold ribbons, and pocket-handkerchiefs, and things, in the City; but then he was member for some place, and was very rich, and it was looked upon as a very good match for Lady Violet. Mr. Joyce was just the man to assert himself in a highly disagreeable manner; he always held views about the supremacy of intellect, and that kind of rubbish; and the more he kept away from them the less chance he would have of exercising any influence over Lady Caroline Mansergh.

It may be imagined, then, that her ladyship was not best pleased when her sister-in-law informed her that she had had a telegram from Walter Joyce, asking whether he might come down to Westhope to see her on special business, and that she "supposed Margaret had no objection." Margaret had strong objections, but did not think it politic to say so just then, so merely intimated that she would be happy to see Mr. Joyce whenever he chose to come. The tone in which this intimation was conveyed was so little pleasing to Lady Caroline that she took care to impress on her sister-in-law the fact that Joyce's visit was to her, Lady Caroline, and that she had merely mentioned his coming as a matter of politeness to her hostess, which did not tend to increase Lady Hetherington's regard for Walter Joyce.

But the bienséances were never neglected on account of any personal feeling, and when Joyce arrived at the station he recognised the familiar livery on the platform, and found a carriage in waiting to convey him to Westhope. During the drive he occupied himself in thinking over the wondrous changes which had taken place since his first visit to that neighbourhood, when, with a wardrobe provided by old Jack Byrne, and a scanty purse supplied from the same source, he had come down in a dependant position, not knowing any of those amongst whom his lot in life was to be passed, and without the least idea as to

the kind of treatment he might expect at their hands. That treatment, he knew, would have been very different had it not been for Lady Caroline Mansergh. But for her counsel, too, he would have suffered himself to have remained completely crushed and vanquished by Marian Ashurst's conduct, would have subsided into a mere drudge without energy or hope. Yes, all the good in his life he owed to the friendship, to the kindly promptings of that sweetest and best of women. He felt that thoroughly, and yet it never struck him that in asking her to advise him as to his marriage with some one else, he was committing, to say the least of it, a solecism. The axiom which declares that the cleverest men have the smallest amount of common sense, has a broader foundation than is generally believed.

On his arrival at Westhope, Joyce was informed by the butler that Lord Hetherington had gone round the Home Farm with the bailiff, and that her ladyship was out driving, but that they would both be home to luncheon, when they expected the pleasure of his company; meanwhile would he walk into the library, where Lady Caroline Mansergh would join him? He went into the library, and had just looked round the room and viewed his old associations, glanced at the desk where he had sat working away for so many hours at a stretch, at the big tomes whence he had extracted the subject-matter for that great historical work, still, alas! incomplete, at the line of Shakespearean volumes which formed Lady Caroline Mansergh's private reading, when the door opened, and Lady Caroline came in. Country air had not had its usual beneficial effect, Joyce thought as he looked at her; for her face was very pale, and her manner nervous and odd. Yet she shook him warmly by the hand, and bade him be seated in her old cheery tone.

"It is very good of you to let me come down here, breaking in upon the rest which I have no doubt you want, and boring you with my own private affairs," said Joyce, seating himself in the window-sill close by the arm-chair which Lady Caroline had taken.

"It is not very good of you to talk conventionalities, and to pretend that you don't know I have a deep interest in all that concerns you," replied Lady Caroline.

"I have every reason to know it, and my last words were merely a foolish utterance of society-talk——"

" Which you always declare you despise, and which you know I detest."

" Quite true ; think it unspoken and absolve me."

" I do ; but if we are to have what you used to call a 'business talk,' we must have it at once. In half an hour Lord and Lady Hetherington and the luncheon will arrive simultaneously, and our chance is at an end. And you did not come from London, I suppose, to discuss tenant right, or to listen to Lady Hetherington's diatribes against servants ?"

" No, indeed ; with all deference to them, I came to see you, and you alone, to ask your advice, and to take it, which is quite a different thing, as I have done before in momentous periods of my life."

" And this is a momentous period ?"

" Undoubtedly, as much, if not more so, than any."

Had she any notion of what was coming ? Her pale face grew paler ; she pushed back her chesnut hair, and her large eyes were fixed on him in grave attention.

" You alone of any one in the world, man or woman, know the exact story of my first love. You knew my confidence and trust, you knew how they were abused. You saw how I suffered at the time, and you cannot be ignorant of what is absolute fact ; that to your advice and encouragement I owe not merely recovery from that wretched state, but the position to which I have since attained !"

" Well ?"

" That first love fell dead ; you know when ! Ambition, the passion that supplied its place, was sufficient for a time to absorb all my thoughts, hopes, and energies. But, to a certain extent it has been gratified, and it suffices me no longer. My heart wants some one to love, and turns to one to whom it owes gratitude, but whom it would sooner meet with a warmer feeling. Are you not well, Lady Caroline ?"

" Quite well, thanks, and—and interested. Pray go on !"

" To go on is difficult. It is so horrible in a man to have to say that he sees he has awakened interest in a woman, that she shows all unknowingly to herself, but still sufficiently palpable, that he is the one person in the world to her, that she rejoices in his presence, and grieves at his absence ; worst of all that all this is pointed out to him by other people——"

Lady Caroline's cheeks flushed as she echoed the words, " Pointed out to him by other people !"

" Exactly. That's the worst of it. However, all this being so, and my feelings such as I have described, I presume I shouldn't be repeating my former error, inviting a repetition of my previous fate, in asking her to be my wife ?"

" I—I should think not." The flush still in her cheeks. " Do I know the lady ?"

" Do you know her ? No one knows her so well ! Ah, Lady Caroline, kindest and dearest of friends, why should I keep you longer in suspense ? It is Maud Creswell !"

Her face blanched in an instant. Her grasp tightened rigidly over the arm of the chair on which it lay, but she gave no other sign of emotion. Even her voice, though hollow and metallic, never shook as she repeated the name, " Maud Creswell !"

" Yes. Maud Creswell ! You are surprised, I see, but I don't think you will blame me for my choice ! She is eminently ladylike, and clever, and nice, and——"

" I don't think you could possibly——what is it, Thomas ?"

" Luncheon, my lady."

" Very well. I must get you to go in to luncheon without me, Mr. Joyce ; you will find Lord and Lady Hetherington in the dining-room, and I will come down directly. We will resume our talk afterwards."

And she left the room, and walked swiftly and not too steadily up the hall towards the staircase.

A NEW RELIGION.

A NEW religion has within the last few years been founded in Persia, which seems destined to exercise a powerful antagonism to Mohammedanism. Amongst the doctrines of the Bábys, as these new sectaries are called, none are more likely to attract attention than those which are intended to effect a radical change in the condition of women in the East. Bábysm was founded in 1843 at Shiraz by Mirza-Ali-Mohammed, a young man of nineteen years of age, who gave out that he was the genuine successor of Ali, the true prophet of Iran. He was endowed with singular beauty of form and features ; with an eloquence which seemed inspired ; and with great earnestness of purpose. The example of Mohammed induced him to prepare himself for his mission by an assiduous study of the ancient systems of religion, and he listened also to the teachings of Protestant missionaries, of orthodox Jews, and of followers of the Kabbala. He made the pilgrimage to Mecca, and visited the tomb of the prophet ; yet in the very midst of the holy city his faith

first wavered, and after a visit to the ruins of the mosque at Kufa, where Ali, his ancestor, had been murdered, he returned to Shiraz, determined to wage open war against the national religion. Many of his fellow-travellers had been so charmed by his eloquence and agreeable manners, that they had followed him to Shiraz, and when he began to explain the Koran in a totally new fashion, they eagerly adopted his interpretation. Mirza-Ali-Mohammed commenced by inveighing against the vices of the Mullahs, and he showed that their actions, their habits, and their doctrines were totally at variance with the commands of the holy book. He preached daily against them in the mosques, and daily gathered round him a larger following of disciples. The Mullahs attempted to refute his assertions in public discussions, but they were worsted in argument, and Mirza's fame was enhanced by his triumph. Had he been satisfied with the part of a reformer only, he would have been safe in the strength of his popularity; but he chose to found a new religion on the ruins of the one he condemned, and thus eventually led his followers into a fatal struggle with the government.

He announced to his disciples that he was the Báb, that is to say, the gate, the mystic gate, by which alone one could enter into the true faith, and acquire a knowledge of God; and from this name his followers have received their appellation of Bábys. Soon afterwards he ventured to assume a still higher rank, and revealed to his numerous disciples that he was not only the gate which led to the knowledge of the Creator, but to a certain degree the very object of that knowledge, that is to say, a divine emanation. He declared that not only was he a prophet, and the greatest of prophets, but that he was prophecy itself: the truth, the Spirit of God in a human form. Thus he returned to the old idea of emanation, and following the theology of the Kabbalists, he taught that the creative power was exercised by seven attributes or emanations of the Deity. To speak without figures, the Creator divides himself, so to say, in order to manifest himself in creation. In the Book of Precepts, translated by M. de Gobineau, are to be found these words attributed to the Creator, which express this idea still more forcibly, "In truth, O my Creation, thou art myself!" In the same work may be read the creed of the new religion: "We have all begun in God, and we shall all return into God, and we draw all our joy from God." According to the Báb, in the Day of Judgment, which is not far distant, this terrible sentence will be heard: "All things shall perish, except divine nature." But this universal destruction will not fall upon those who have known the truth, who have read the holy books, or who shall implore the divine mercy at the last moment. Paradise is defined by the Báb as "the love of God which has nothing more to desire, the love of God fully satisfied." It is easy to see that the doctrines

of the Báb could not be reconciled with the traditions and faith of Islam, and the social morality taught therein was more likely even than the theology to render the Báb hostile to the official religion. He attacked the fundamental vices of Mohammedan society; he condemned polygamy and censured the seclusion and veiling of women, and by abolishing the laws which forbade the intercourse of true believers with unbelievers, he introduced a new element of progress into Persian society. The rank which the Báb assumed did not fail to attract the attention of the authorities. His pantheistic mysticism led him to promulgate a particular doctrine with reference to revelation, and especially with reference to himself as the expounder of revelation. Thus, although all men were said to come forth equally from the bosom of the Deity, yet they did not all represent him in the same degree, and only a very few of them received the mission of disclosing the divine thoughts to mortals: these are the prophets, whom the Báb describes as the living word of God. Each of the predecessors of the Báb had prepared the way for his successor, but in the Báb himself it was no longer a mere prophet who had come down upon earth, but prophecy itself, of which he was the culminating point, and which he exercised simultaneously and mysteriously with eighteen other persons, male and female, who were imbued with the same spirit. These nineteen holy persons have but one common soul, and each on his death transmits to his successor that part which he possessed of the common soul, which, when added to the original soul, fits him for the mysterious labours he is to perform.

In addition to these innovations, he wished to effect a total revolution in the daily habits and customs of his disciples. Having fixed upon the number nineteen as the sacred number, and as the mystic bond which united earth to heaven, he determined that that number should govern all things capable of enumeration and division. Thus the year was divided into nineteen months, the month into nineteen days, the day into nineteen hours, and the hour into nineteen minutes; and so also with the division of weights, of measures, and of coins; the same number was also to be used in the division of the offices for the administration of the new society when it was thoroughly established.

The exasperated Mullahs now thought they had found a golden opportunity for revenge; they cried out loudly against his apostasy, his sacrilege, and his blasphemy; and they succeeded in persuading the civil functionaries that they had discovered the germs of a dangerous political conspiracy. Both parties appealed to the government at Teheran to crush the bold innovator.

Mohammed Shah, who was then ruling over Persia, was an indolent and invalid prince; the only course he took was to impose silence on all the parties; and, to provide against any disturbance, he ordered the governor of Shiraz not to allow the Báb to go beyond the limits

of his own house. These mild measures only served further to exasperate the Mullahs, and to swell the ranks of the Bâbys. A crowd of proselytes joined them, coming from all classes in Persia; merchants, artizans, learned men, and even ministers of the official religion, flocked to Shiraz.

The strength to which the Bâbys had now attained stirred up the ambition of some restless spirits, and induced a belief that they might triumph by violence over the followers of other creeds. The Bâb took no part in this change from the original constitution of the society; whether from natural gentleness of character, or from respect to the sovereign, or from a sincere feeling that violence was foreign to a divine mission, he remained quietly at Shiraz. But a fiery apostle, a priest of Khorassan, named Hossein, succeeded in infusing a warlike spirit into the Bâbys, and in giving a military form to the ranks of the believers. Hossein's vast learning, unflinching daring, and wonderful capacity, rendered him an object of admiration even to his bitterest enemies. He took upon himself the part of action, leaving to the Bâb, who was called the Sublime Highness, the part of speculation. Hossein was the first missionary of the new faith, and he preached its doctrines with immense success, not only in the Khorassan, his native country, but also in the province of Irak, at Ispahan, and as far as Kashan. He set out for Teheran in the hope of accomplishing there the work he had so successfully commenced; but on his arrival there he was silenced by the same means which had checked his master's progress. He was forbidden to preach in public, but he was not prevented from expounding his religion privately. Mohammed Shah and his prime minister, excited by their curiosity, condescended to listen to one of his addresses; but enjoined him, under penalty of death, to go and preach his doctrines elsewhere than in the capital.

The zeal of Hossein soon attracted two other converts to imitate his example. One of these was a learned man like Hossein, and a devout person whom the people up to that time had honoured as a saint, his name was Hadji-Mohammed; the other was a lady of high rank, named Zerryn Tadj, "The Crown of Gold," who, on account of her extraordinary beauty, had received the surname of Gourret-oul-Ayn, or "The Consolation of the Eyes." Her beauty was, however, amongst the least of her good qualities; learning, eloquence, spotless reputation, and fervid enthusiasm combined to render her a most important convert, and a fit leader. She received from the Bâbys the appellation of Her Highness the Pure; and while she inveighed against the seclusion to which her sex was condemned, she had the courage to show herself in public unveiled, to the great scandal of all orthodox Mohammedans. Her purity, her courage, and her eloquence gave a wonderful impulse to the religion of the Bâb, and yet, strange to say, she had never even seen the Bâb himself. Her father was one of the

most celebrated lawyers and theologians of the country, whilst her husband and her father-in-law were ministers of high rank of the Mussulman religion; thus they were all naturally hostile to the tenets of Ali-Mohammed. It was in their fierce and angry denunciations of the Bâb, that she first heard of the new religion, and struck by the chance which it seemed to afford to her sex of escaping from the slavery and degradation imposed upon it by Eastern society, she determined to inquire for herself, and entering upon a correspondence with Mirza-Ali-Mohammed, she became converted to his religion, by the arguments contained in his letters. In spite of the prayers and threats of the two families, she left all that was most dear to her, and went forth to preach the religion of liberty in the streets and public places of her native town Kaswyn, and afterwards throughout the neighbouring towns. The three apostles of the religion of the Bâb now determined to hold a conference; and at their meeting the task of the spiritual conquest of Persia was divided between them. Hossein took the southern provinces, Hadji-Mohammed the northern provinces, and the "Consolation of the Eyes" undertook the western provinces. It was not yet time for a second attack upon the capital, and the eastern parts of the empire. At first their work progressed smoothly, and as long as their adversaries were content with abusing and denouncing them, the apostles of the new faith were satisfied with simply preaching its doctrines; but as soon as they discovered that their adversaries, taking advantage of the anarchy which reigned in many parts of Persia, had determined to destroy them by force, they rose up in arms, and Hossein became their commander. The small band of followers which Hossein had collected in the Khorassan united with the recruits drawn from the Mazendéran by Hadji-Mohammed, and the two leaders found themselves at the head of a compact little army, the numbers of which increased daily as new disciples flocked to their standard. They now thought themselves strong enough not only to ward off attack, but even to subdue their opponents. To rouse the enthusiasm of the soldiers of the new faith, a popular leader was required; such a one was found in the "Consolation of the Eyes," who, putting herself at their head, boldly and successfully fulfilled the mission which had been allotted to her. Her presence in the camp was alone sufficient materially to increase the number of the followers of the Bâb, and crowds of people came from all sides to see her, and to listen to her impassioned eloquence.

By a stroke of policy, Hossein gave to his superior officers the names of the twelve imams and of the other descendants of Ali, whose souls he asserted lived again in them. Thus he gave new enthusiasm to his followers, while he supplied a link by which the new religion was connected with the ancient national form of worship. All were now eager for the fray; but it came sooner than was expected. Me-

reddin Shah, the successor of the indolent Mohammed Shah, after a successful campaign against the insurgents who disturbed the beginning of his reign, determined to crush the Bâbys. Orders were given to the authorities of Mazendéran to march at once on the followers of the Bâb, and to destroy them utterly. The first place attacked was the fortress which Hossein had erected in a place called the Pilgrimage of the Sheikh Teberay, and which contained a garrison of two thousand men, furnished with provisions and with all the means of resisting a siege of some duration. M. Gobineau says that three small armies, under the command of one of the best Persian generals, successively assailed the walls of the fortress, and were beaten off with great loss. The government felt that it must put forth all its strength if it wished to crush the new sectaries.

A fourth expedition, consisting of a much larger number of troops, was sent against the Bâbys, who now had to endure the miseries of a protracted siege. Their provisions were soon exhausted, and they barely contrived to sustain life by eating the flesh of the few horses which were killed in battle, and by feeding on the bark of trees, and on the scanty grass which grew in the ditches of the fortress. For four months they had to seek shelter in holes which they dug behind the ruins of the fortress which was set on fire by their opponents, and whence they had to rush at any moment to repel the constant attacks of the besiegers. Their chief was killed in their last final struggle, and there only remained two hundred and fourteen dying persons, including many women, who in vain tried to assuage the pangs of hunger by chewing the leather of their belts, and of the scabbards of their sabres. They had attempted to make flour by grinding the bones of the dead. Reduced to the last extremity, they resolved to capitulate on condition of their lives being spared; but the leaders of the royal army, regardless of their word, caused them to be put to death with horrible torture. In the bodies of many of them was found raw grass on which they had made their last meal. This disaster did not prevent the Bâbys from making progress in other parts of Persia, and their greatest success was at Zendjân, where, however, a most terrible trial awaited them, and where, in a dreadful struggle, not less sanguinary than that at the fortress of the Sheikh Tebersy, Bâbysm was to lose its most influential leaders.

At Zendjân, Mohammed Ali held the same position which Hossein had held in the Khorassan; he had gathered fifteen thousand men around him, and in his first encounters with the royal troops he had driven back forces twice as large as his own. It seemed as if the Bâbys would now have succeeded in establishing their republic, but they were overwhelmed by the superior numbers of their enemies, and Zendjân fell after a most gallant and protracted resistance. Mohammed Ali, like Hossein, fell in battle at the head of his troops, and the

few who survived were caught in the same trap as those who capitulated at the fortress of Sheikh Tebersy. They were promised their lives, but were treacherously put to death or carried to Teheran to undergo torture at the hands of their victors.

The Shah now thought that he could put an end to Bâbysm by the death of its founder, forgetting that nothing could give greater strength to the religion he had founded than his martyrdom. After the capture of Zendjân, the Bâb was taken to the citadel of Tebriz. He continued quietly to work, to study, and to pray; his gentleness and his courage surprised his enemies; he was loaded with chains, and dragged through the streets and bazaars of Tebriz; he was pelted with mud and struck in the face, without giving vent to a single murmur. Two of his disciples who had shared his captivity were chained with him. One of them, Seyd Hossein, being informed that he might obtain pardon by insulting him, suddenly turned round and cursed him, spitting in his face; but even this last outrage did not move the Bâb from his resignation. He was suspended by ropes from the ramparts of Tebriz, and a troop of soldiers ordered to shoot him, but he escaped as if by a miracle, the shot only cutting the ropes without wounding him, and the soldiers cut him to pieces with their swords. His only consolation was to hear the disciple who had remained faithful to him, ask him as he was on the point of death, "Master, art thou satisfied with me?"

Of the leaders of Bâbysm, Gourret-oul-Ayn, "the Consolation of the Eyes," was now the sole survivor; she had not long to wait before she also suffered the same fate as her master. A general proscription was decreed against the Bâbys; to be a follower of the Bâb was to be declared guilty of high treason; and thousands of innocent persons were tortured and put to death; the victims, many of them women and children, singing as they were being massacred the words, "In truth we come from God and we return to God: in truth we belong to God and we return to Him." Gourret-oul-Ayn was seized by Mahmoud Khan, but treated with great respect; and, whether from admiration for her beauty and her virtue, or out of fear of the popular favour on her side, she was promised life and liberty on condition of denying the faith to which she belonged. Mahmoud Khan came back one day from the royal camp, and told her that he had good news for her. "You will be taken to Niaveran, and they will ask you if you are one of the Bâbys; all you have to say is 'No,' and no one will molest you." Her answer was, "You are wrong, Mahmoud Khan, you should give me a better message, but you do not know it yourself; to-morrow you yourself will have me burnt alive, and I shall render a fitting testimony to God and to His Eternal Highness." Mahmoud could not believe that she would not save her life, and again and again he begged her to reflect. She said she scorned to preserve for a few days longer a

form which must soon perish, and warned him to prepare also for death. "For," said she, "the king whom you serve so zealously will not reward you; on the contrary, he will cause you to perish by a cruel death." Four years afterwards her prophecy was fulfilled, Mahmoud Khan, by order of the king, had his beard pulled out, was beaten with rods, and finally strangled; she herself, as she had foretold, being burnt alive on the day following her conversation with Mahmoud, but her name became holy in the memory of the Bâbys, and the example of her heroic self-sacrifice attracted more partisans to Bâbysm than all the exhortations of its preachers. The same day the penitent Seyd Hossein, who had denied his master, came to lay down his life with his fellow-disciples. Bâbysm now lost its political and military character, and once more became simply a religion. A youth sixteen years old, named Mirza Yahya, was chosen as successor to the Bâb, and took up his residence at Baghdad. Here, sheltered from persecution, on the frontier of two Mohammedan empires, and in the midst of a great concourse of travellers and pilgrims, the new religion has planted its standard, and continues its mission, which seems far from being as yet completed.

We have already given a sketch of the theology of Bâbysm, and it now remains to describe the most marked characteristics of its morality and policy; for as the Bâbys were confident that they would conquer the world, it was necessary that they should publish to the world the principles on which they intended to found their government of it. The religion of the Bâb addresses itself to the mind rather than to the body; thus it prefers meditation to prayer, and solitary prayer, as being most akin to meditation, to prayer in public. The functions of its ministers are limited to the duties of praying and teaching.

The religion of the Bâb does not desire any painful sacrifices from mankind. "All that is demanded of you by the Most High is love and contentment," says the Bâb. The general character of its morality is summed up in two obligations: "Charity towards others, and circumspection as regards oneself." The first form of charity is doing good to the poor and the wretched. Hospitality is just as much an obligation as almsgiving; it must be practised at least once a year towards a poor man or a stranger, even if one have nothing more to offer than a cup of cold water; and rich men are to invite to their table a number of poor guests proportionate to their wealth. In the Book of Precepts it is written, "O ye rich, enrich the poor on the part of your Lord;" but, on the other hand, it is forbidden to give to beggars, for to beg is sinful. If the religion of the Bâb requires its followers to contribute as much as possible to the common happiness, still more does it require that one should do no harm to one's neighbour, even though one should have received injury at his hands. Violence is not to be met with violence, nor

injury by injury; courtesy and want of civility is stigmatised as a sin, and moderation of language in argument is classed amongst the virtues. Women and children are especially to be cared for; and the Bâb is not satisfied with having delivered women from the slavery to which they are subjected in the East; he is not satisfied with raising them to the proper rank of wives by abolishing polygamy and divorce, nor with prohibiting their forced seclusion, but he lays down that they must be especially respected and honoured, and that they should be allowed to act with perfect liberty in all matters which cannot hurt their honour or their health. Their natural taste for elegance should be indulged as much as possible; with true Eastern gallantry, he says, "Adorn your ornament; glorify your glory." Contrary to the usages of all Asiatic countries, he admitted women to the tables and meetings of men; but he warns the ministers of religion not to enter into long conversations with them—"beyond eighteen words forbear to continue your speech with them; you can derive no good from more."

Remembering the severity with which he had been punished at school, he forbids any one to beat a child who is under five years of age, and after that age he enjoins that he should be chastised with gentleness. He warns parents to consider the health of their children as much as their education, and adds, with true affection for them, "allow them all that can make them happy." He orders his disciples not to over-work or overburden the animals they employ. The true believer is to be charitable and indulgent to others, and not to be too severe with himself; fasting and other trials of endurance are forbidden him after the age of forty-two, and long and distant journeys are to be avoided. His virtues are to be, so to say, every-day virtues—not heroic virtues, which require to be brought forth by extraordinary circumstances. All that can render life agreeable and increase his gratitude to his Creator, is allowed to the true believer, so long as he does nothing which can injure him; but opium and fermented liquors are forbidden. The Bâb and his eighteen colleagues hold almost all the property of the society, and have the right to levy very heavy taxes. With the money thus collected they are able to maintain the priests, keep up the religious buildings, assist the poor, alleviate distress, and educate the faithful. There is not much originality in this system, and its dogmas are chiefly borrowed from ancient systems. Its morality is even below that of the Stoics. Its ideal city is an Utopia, which would infallibly degenerate into a despotism. Its most original feature is the principle of the permanent incarnation of the Deity in a body of nineteen persons. It is, however, so much more imaginative, more liberal, and more enlightened than Islamism; and it has done so much good by abolishing polygamy and raising the status of women, that it possesses advantages over it which make it a formidable rival, destined, perhaps, some day to

displace the official religion, and to form the connecting link of transition between Europe and Asia.

SIGNALLING VERSUS SHOUTING.

TO THE EDITOR.

SIR.—I regret exceedingly that I am under the necessity of opening this letter by alluding to a purely personal matter. To do this is against my principles, but if I would give full weight to what is to follow, it is absolutely necessary that those principles should be sacrificed. Let me state, then, that I have recently had the misfortune to partially lose my speaking voice. The inconvenience of this loss is very great, for though I can manage, under specially favourable circumstances, to make myself heard when conversing quietly with my friends in a corner, I can do no more. When I am in a room in which general conversation is being carried on in at all a loud key, when I am in the street and exposed to competition with all sorts of street noises, above all when I am riding in a carriage of any sort or kind, however easy or skilfully hung, any remarks I may be tempted to make are totally inaudible.

Imagine, then, to what a condition of complete practical dumbness I find myself reduced when rattling over the London stones in a street cab. The tremendous din, the rattling, the bumping, the jingling, and the grinding which attend the progress of these noisy little vehicles through the streets of our metropolis are familiar to us all. We all have to shout at the top of our voices when we desire to make a remark, and the consequence is that it may be observed that most people when making a cab voyage are decidedly prone to be taciturn.

But, however uncommunicative we may be with regard to our fellow-passengers, however severely we may repress our conversational tendencies, dismissing many a tempting observation which rises to our lips, and steadily and consistently repressing any inclination to the narration of anecdote, there is still one form of conversation which we cannot dispense with, and that is the kind of conversation which, under certain circumstances, is carried on in yells and shouts between the passenger in the interior of the cab, and the driver on the box. Dialogue of this sort there is, for the most part, no evading. It is true that if you want to go to the Polytechnic Institution, or the St. James's Hall, you can inform your cabman of your desire at starting, and he will probably drive you straight to your destination; but when you are bound for some little known, and, above all, some new neighbourhood in the suburbs—some Elizabeth-terrace, or Upper Shrewsbury-gardens, Notting-hill, for instance—then, from the moment of your leaving the great main thoroughfare which leads in the direction of your suburb, it behoves you to have your head and the greater part of your body out of window, and to howl unintermittingly, “To the right!” “To the left!”

“No, no, not up there—stop! you can't get through—you must turn back!” and the like. This is a highly disagreeable exercise. The possessor of the strongest voice can barely make himself heard by dint of immense exertion, and even that favoured personage generally finds that he has been carried some quarter of a mile past his proper turning before he has been able to convince the driver that his road lies to the right or left instead of straight on. Living in Elizabeth-terrace, as above, for some years, I used to find the wild screams of wanderers in cabs as they were driven about that intricate neighbourhood, towards dinner time, a serious and alarming annoyance. No cab ever approached which did not exhibit a contracted human being protruding through its window, howling and gesticulating madly.

But what is this necessity of making one's voice heard above the noise ground by the wheels of a cab out of a newly macadamised street; there is not traffic enough to wear the road smooth in Elizabeth-terrace; to one whom circumstances and asthma have temporarily left in a nearly voiceless condition! Carried past any turning with which I had any concern, whirled round corners entirely out of my line of route, unable to reach the driver with my umbrella, unable to let down the front windows, in consequence of an absence of straps for that purpose, and wholly incapable of making myself heard though trying till I was black in the face, and presenting so alarming an appearance to passers-by, that they would stop in their walk expectant of my demise by suffocation, I have sometimes sunk back in my seat, and, giving way to despair, have suffered inexorable Fate to conduct me whither it would.

It has been necessary for me to enter into all these particulars, for which I beg humbly to apologise, in order that I might make known to you, Editorial Sir (and through you to a discerning public), how it came about that, urged on and stimulated by that necessity which is the mother of invention, I came to hit upon an idea.

That idea is, that those who ride in cabs should have the means of directing the driver which way to go, without moving from their seats, without putting their heads and bodies out of window, without screaming themselves hoarse.

There are two ways in which this might be accomplished: either by means of a flexible speaking tube passing through the front of the vehicle, and with its mouth brought close to the cabman's ear; or, still more simply, by means of a couple of check-strings, one attached to the right arm, and the other to the left arm of the driver. To the first of these plans objection may be made. Although the speaking tube answers perfectly well for private carriages, it might not be equally suitable to public conveyances. In the case of your own carriage you know who uses the instrument; but in the case of a cab many persons might object to put their lips to a

mouth-piece which had been publicly used. There would also be some expenditure necessitated in fitting the London cabs with such an apparatus. No such objection could possibly apply to the other plan. A couple of holes bored in the wooden division which separates the two front windows of the conveyance, and a piece of worsted cord passed through each, would be all that need be provided.

We see no plan of this sort once adopted, there need be no more struggling through windows, no more ineffectual attempts to reach the driver with umbrellas, no more shouting directions rendered inaudible by the sound of the wheels. When the "fare" wanted to go to the right, he would touch the right check-string, when he wanted to go to the left, he would touch the left check-string, and when he desired to stop, he could pull both. Thus the occupant of the vehicle would be virtually his own coachman; he would drive the cabman, and the cabman would drive the horse.

In our open hansom cabs, a system of telegraphy is already established between the fare and the driver, the former communicating his wishes to the latter by means of certain indicative movements of his stick or umbrella. This plan answers completely, and the being able to dispense with the shouting process, even in the instance of those who have voices to shout with, is conducive to good temper, a tranquil expression of countenance, and the dignity of personal repose; all irreconcileable with anxious struggling and shouting, even if such shouting were efficacious, which is certainly not the case, for his efforts will infallibly disappoint, as well as discompose, the shouter, and will bring him to the melancholy conviction that under such circumstances at any rate, if under no other,

UNA VOCE POCO FA.

THE WAKE OF TIM O'HARA.

I.

To the Wake of O'Hara
Came company;—
All St. Patrick's Alley
Was there to see,
With the friends and kinsmen
Of the family.

On the old deal table Tim lay, in white,
And at his pillow the burning light;
While pale as himself, with the tear on her cheek,
The mother received us,—too full to speak.
But she heap'd the fire, and with never a word,
Set the black bottle upon the board,
While the company gathered, one and all,
Men and women, big and small,—
Not one in the alley but felt a call
To the Wake of Tim O'Hara.

II.

At the face of O'Hara
All white with sleep,
Not one of the women
But took a peep,
And the wives new wedded
Began to weep.

The mothers clustered around about,
And praised the linen and laying out,

For white as snow was his winding-sheet,
And all looked peaceful, and clean, and sweet.
The old wives, praising the blessed dead,
Clustered thick round the old press-bed,
Where O'Hara's widow, tattered and torn,
Held to her bosom the babe new born,
And stared all round her, with eyes forlorn,

At the Wake of Tim O'Hara.

III.

For the heart of O'Hara

Was true as gold,
And the life of O'Hara
Was bright and bold,
And his smile was precious
To young and old.
Gay as a guinea, wet or dry,
With a smiling mouth and a twinkling eye!
Had ever an answer for chaff or fun,
Would fight like a lion with any one!
Not a neighbour of any trade
But knew some joke that the boy had made!
Not a neighbour, dull or bright,
But minded something, frolic or fight,
And whispered it round the fire that night,

At the Wake of Tim O'Hara!

IV.

"To God be glory
In death and life!
He's taken O'Hara
From trouble and strife,"

Said one-eyed Biddy,

The apple-wife.

"God bless old Ireland!" said Mistress Hart,
Mother to Mike of the donkey-cart:
"God bless old Ireland till all be done!
She never made wake for a better son!"
And all joined chorus, and each one said
Something kind of the boy that was dead.
The bottle went round from lip to lip,
And the weeping widow, for fellowship,
Took the glass of old Biddy, and had a sip,
At the Wake of Tim O'Hara.

V.

Then we drank to O'Hara
With drams to the brim,
While the face of O'Hara
Looked on so grim,
In the corpse-light shining

Yellow and dim.

The drink went round again and again;
The talk grew louder at every drain;
Louder the tongues of the women grew;
The tongues of the boys were loosing too!
But the widow her weary eyelids closed,
And, soothed by the drop of drink, she dozed;
The mother brightened and laughed to hear
Of O'Hara's fight with the grenadier,
And the hearts of us all took better cheer
At the Wake of Tim O'Hara.

VI.

Tho' the face of O'Hara
Looked on so wan,
In the chimney corner
The row began;
Lame Tony was in it,
The oyster-man.

For a dirty low thief from the north came near
And whistled "Boyne Water" in his ear,
And Tony, with never a word of grace,
Hit out his fist in the blackguard's face.
Then all the women screamed out for fright;
The men that were drunkest began to fight;
Over, the chairs and tables they threw;
The corpse-light tumbled, the trouble grew;
The new-born joined in the hullabaloo,
At the Wake of Tim O'Hara.

VII.

"Be still! Be silent!
Ye do a sin!
Shame be his portion
Who dares begin!"—
'Twas Father O'Connor
Just entered in;

And all looked shamed, and the row was done:
Sorry and sheepish looked every one;
But the priest just smiled quite easy and free—
"Would you wake the poor boy from his sleep?"
said he.
And he said a prayer, with a shining face,
Till a kind of a brightness filled the place;
The women lit up the dim corpse-light;
The men were quieter at the sight;—
And the peace of the Lord fell on all that night
At the Wake of Tim O'Hara.

A GENTLEMAN OF THE PRESS.

IN TWO CHAPTERS. CHAPTER II.

WE left Defoe in our last, emerging from the chrysalis of his prison into the full-fledged butterfly state of liberty. As soon as he had paid his fees, and left the doors of Newgate behind him, he sought the fresh breezes of the rural districts. With his bodily health somewhat impaired by his long confinement, but with a spirit undaunted as of old, he retired for awhile to Bury St. Edmunds with his family, to recruit his energies. But the brain, and the right hand with the pen in it, were not idle. Pamphlet followed upon pamphlet, treatise upon treatise, book upon book, in such profusion, that the mere catalogue of them would occupy pages. But in addition to his writings in support of the Whig government, he seems to have been otherwise employed in its behalf. Writing ten years afterwards of this period of his life, he states that "being delivered from the distress I was in, her Majesty, who was not satisfied to do me good by a single act of her bounty, had the goodness to think of taking me into her service, and I had the honour to be employed in honourable though secret services by the interposition of my first benefactor." But Defoe, notwithstanding this royal and ministerial favour, was not yet in smooth water. The ruin of the brick and pantile business sat heavily upon him, and merciless creditors (some of them let loose upon him by his political enemies), harassed him with vexatious law-suits and exorbitant demands. To such an extent did the persecution prevail, that he found it expedient for awhile to absent himself from his home, and travel incognito in the south-west of England. But even in this emergency Harley continued to be his friend, and gave him a commission, wherever he could act with

safety, to lend a helping hand at the general election to any Whig and liberal candidate in the south-western boroughs who might need the support of his pen or his advice. During this somewhat mysterious peregrination, Defoe travelled about eleven hundred miles on horseback, and not only found time to attend meetings, public, private, and social, to advise and consult with candidates and local celebrities, but to carry on his Review, and write the whole of it from beginning to end.

Defoe's most important work after this time, and when he had settled with his pantile creditors under the supervision of the Court of Bankruptcy, was his *Essay on Removing National Prejudices against a Union with Scotland*: Part the First. This union, as Defoe well knew, had been the favourite project of his beloved master, King William; and when the idea was taken up by the administration of which his friend Harley was the leading spirit, Defoe went into the matter with heart and soul. The First Part of the *Essay* being well received, was followed by Part the Second, and rendered such good service that the author was employed by the government on a mission to Scotland, to carry on in that country the good work he had performed in England, by rendering popular the proposed legislative union of the two countries. Before starting on his mission, Defoe was introduced for the first time to Queen Anne, and had the honour of kissing hands on his appointment. He resided in Edinburgh for three years, and appears to have made many friends in the Scottish capital, and to have taken a liking both to the people and the country.

He had been two years in Edinburgh, doing his utmost to popularise the Union, which was still under debate in the Scottish Parliament, when he published his first avowed work since he had quitted London, entitled *Caledonia: a Poem in Honour of Scotland and the Scots Nation*: in Three Parts. The love for Scotland exhibited in this composition remained in his heart as long as he lived. At one time, indeed, he had serious thoughts of taking up his permanent residence in that country. He paid it several visits in the service of the government, edited for awhile the *Edinburgh Courant*, and interested himself in plans for the development of its trade and commerce, its linen manufactures, and its fisheries. He also published his ideas on the subject of the improvements to be effected in the picturesque old city of Edinburgh, recom-

mended the filling up of the North Loch at the foot of the Castle Rock, and suggested the laying out of a new city, on the very site on which it was afterwards built. In Edinburgh he published his History of the Union of Great Britain: a work which his exertions had greatly aided to bring to the historical point. So intimate a knowledge did he acquire of Scotland, that after the Act of Union had been accomplished, and when there was reason to believe that a Jacobite rebellion, instigated by France, was in progress, Defoe, who had in the interval returned to London, was despatched to Scotland on a second secret mission. Previous to his departure he had his second interview with Queen Anne, upon which occasion, he says, "Her Majesty was pleased to tell me, with a goodness peculiar to herself, that she had much satisfaction in my former services, that she had appointed me for another affair, which was something *nice* (sic), and that my lord treasurer should tell me the rest." This mission, the precise object of which appears never to have been divulged by Defoe, though he says "it was an errand which was far from being unfit for a sovereign to direct or an honest man to perform," was probably, as Mr. Lee and his other biographers suppose, to direct the public opinion of Scotland against the principles and purposes of the Jacobites, and to confirm the minds of the people in favour of the Hanoverian succession. Defoe felt strongly on the subject, and at the first rumour of a French invasion of Scotland, to support a rising in favour of the Pretender, recommended the offer of a reward for the capture of the Pretender, and the arrest of forty or fifty of the Highland chieftains and other foremost Jacobites. "This done," he added, "the Pretender may come when he pleases; he'll meet with but cold entertainment in the North of Britain."

Space would fail us if we were to attempt to go minutely through the services and the writings of Defoe from this period to the imprisonment of his friend and benefactor, Harley, Earl of Oxford, and the death of Queen Anne. His pen was never idle, and as he took his side in politics, and a very marked and decisive one, at a time when men's passions were greatly excited, and the bosom of society was still throbbing and heaving with the under-swell of a revolution that had not yet consolidated itself into an unchangeable fact, it is not to be supposed that the number of his enemies was not as great as that of his friends, and that his enemies were not

louder in their attacks upon him than his friends in their defence of him. One of the most pertinacious charges brought against him was, that he wrote for hire, always coupled with the dirty innuendo that he wrote for the side which paid best, and that he had no personal predilections for one side more than the other. Defoe never denied that he lived by the rewards of his literary labour, but with manly indignation repelled the calumny that he ever wrote in opposition to his honest conviction. "If," said he, in a strain of true eloquence, "I have espoused a wrong cause; if I have acted in a good cause in an unfair manner; if I have for fear, favour, or by the bias of any man in the world, great or small, acted against what I always professed, or what is the known interest of the nation; if I have in any way abandoned that glorious principle of truth and liberty which I was ever embarked in, and which I trust I shall never, through fear or hope, step one inch back from; if I have done thus, then, as Job says, in another case, let thistles grow instead of wheat, and cockles instead of barley. Then, and not till then, may I be esteemed a mercenary, a missionary, a spy, or what you please. But if the cause be just; if it be the peace, security, and happiness of both nations; if I have done it honestly and effectually, how does it alter the case if I have been fairly encouraged, supported, and rewarded in the work, as God knows I have not? Does the mission disable the messenger, or does it depend upon the merit of the message? Cease your inquiry, then, about my being sent by this or that person or party, till you can agree who it is, when I shall be glad of an opportunity to own it, as I see no cause to be ashamed of my errand. Oh, but 'tis a scandalous employment to write for bread! The worse for him, gentlemen, that he should take so much pains, run so many risks, make himself so many enemies, and expose himself to so much scurrilous treatment for bread, and not get it neither. Assure yourselves, had not Providence found out other and unlooked-for supplies by mere wonders of goodness, you had long ago had the desire of your hearts—to starve him out of this employment. But, after all, suppose you say true—that all I do is for bread—which I assure you is very false—what are all the employments in the world pursued for, but for bread? But though it has been quite otherwise in my case, I am easy, and can depend upon that promise, 'Thy bread shall be given thee,

and thy water shall be sure.' I have espoused an honest interest, and have steadily adhered to it all my days; I never forsook it when it was oppressed, I never made a gain by it when it was advanced; and I thank God it is not in the power of all the courts and parties in Christendom to bid a price high enough to buy me off from it, or make me desert it."

Before coming to the third and concluding period of Defoe's life, when, after the accession of George the First, he is supposed to have retired from the political arena, and to have devoted the remainder of his days to the composition of less ephemeral works, the immortal story of Robinson Crusoe among the number, let us glance little while at the subjects unconnected with party politics that occupied him. Free trade was familiar to his thoughts a dozen years before Adam Smith was born, and a generation before the grandfathers of Peel, Cobden, and Bright were thought of. In a pamphlet published in 1713, on the recently concluded treaty of peace and commerce with France, he expatiated largely on the advantages of free trade: asserting that the international reduction and abolition of the Customs duties would increase trade, cheapen commodities, promote national and individual wealth, and become, in the course of time, the truest guarantee of peace among all nations. What more or what better could Mr. Gladstone or Mr. Bright say in the year 1869? Under the pseudonym of Andrew Moreton, in a pamphlet entitled *Augusta Triumphant*; or, the Way to make London the most Flourishing City in the World, he suggested six methods for the moral, intellectual, and physical advancement of the metropolis. These were, first, "the establishment of a university where gentlemen may have academical education under the eye of their friends." This idea of Defoe was brought into practice a hundred years afterwards, and University College, in Gower-street, and King's College, in the Strand, testify to this generation the forethought of this remarkable man. Second, "to prevent child murder, &c., by establishing a hospital for foundlings." The good Captain Coram, in an after time, carried out this idea. Third, "the suppression of pretended madhouses, where many of the fair sex are unjustly confined by their husbands and others, and many widows are locked up for the sake of their jointure." The law in due time took up this idea also, and the licensing and visitation of

public and private madhouses and lunatic asylums were made, as Defoe suggested, a matter of public policy. Fourth, "to save our youth from destruction by clearing the streets of impudent strumpets, suppressing gaming tables, &c." This reform has only been partially carried out in our day, but none the less is the merit of Defoe for having suggested and urged it a century and a half ago. Fifth, "to avoid the extensive importation of foreign musicians by forming an academy of our own." This also has been done, though without the national effects anticipated. Sixth, "to save our lower class of people from utter ruin, by preventing the immoderate use of Geneva and other spirituous liquors." This, too, has been attempted, and still occupies the attention of theorists and philanthropists, though the end aimed at seems still as distant as when Defoe wrote. Another of Defoe's projects was to supersede the London watchmen of his day, whom he called "decrepit superannuated wretches, with one foot in the grave and the other ready to follow, and so feeble that a puff of breath could blow them down," and replace them by a watch of stout able-bodied men, "one man to every forty houses, twenty on one side of the way, and twenty on the other—the said men to be armed." It was fully a hundred years after Defoe's time that the late Sir Robert Peel acted on Defoe's idea, abolished the stupid old watchmen, and established what even now is sometimes called the "new" police. What, after all, would mere statesmanship be, if genius had not gone before it, preparing the way, and accustoming the minds of men to the new thing, which men will, somehow or other, never consent to accept until the idea of it has grown old and familiar?

The death of Queen Anne, like that of King William, marks an important epoch in the career of Defoe, who, as he says, had been "thirteen times rich and thirteen times poor, and felt all the difference between the closet of a king (or queen), and the dungeon in Newgate!" Yet Defoe, who had been in the confidence of two sovereigns and their advisers, was not destined to fall either into obscurity or idleness. The new king could not speak a word of English, differing in this respect from all his predecessors since the days of the earliest Plantagenets; and could not therefore know, except by report, how powerful an English writer Defoe was, and what good service he had rendered, and was yet capable of rendering, to the principles which

had seated the Hanoverian family upon the throne. Queen Anne, who had always, as a born Stuart, been coqueting more or less openly with the Jacobites and Tories, and other friends of her exiled father, had left a Tory ministry in power when she died. The new king, replaced it by a Whig administration; and dismissed from public office, great or small, every person who had been appointed by the ministers of his predecessors, whether those ministers were Whig, Tory, or Coalition. Among the number Defoe lost his employ in the secret service of the court, and was reduced to depend, as at an earlier period of his literary career, wholly upon his pen for his daily bread. He was growing old by this time, not so much by the pressure of years, he was but fifty-four, as by the pressure of hard work and anxiety, and he could not labour so diligently as of old. Early in the king's reign, and within a few months of the loss of the certain source of income which he had long enjoyed, the strong brain of the ready writer was smitten with apoplexy. For six weeks he lay in a precarious condition, but ultimately recovered so far as to take once more the keen interest in public affairs which he had always exhibited. The Jacobites, seeing no longer the chance of favour from George the First that they had enjoyed from Queen Anne, began to plot the rebellion, which soon afterwards culminated in Scotland, under the leadership of the Pretender, called by his English friends James the Third, and by his Scottish friends James the Eighth. Bishop Atterbury published at this juncture his well-known pamphlet, *English Advice to the Freeholders of England*, in which he all but openly advocated rebellion; spoke disrespectfully of the king; denounced the new ministers; and branded the whole body of the Whig and liberal party, as enemies to the Church, and the best interests of the nation. A proclamation offering a reward of one thousand pounds for the discovery of the author, and of five hundred pounds for the arrest of the printer, was speedily offered. Atterbury fled to avoid the consequences. Defoe, who had scarcely recovered from the severe attack which had prostrated him, wrote and published a reply to that *Traitorous Libel* (so he called it), in which there was no falling off of his literary energy, no diminution of his logical power, no cooling of his warm spirit of patriotism. This pamphlet, and one or two others of less note, written under the pseudonym of *One of the people called*

Quakers, have hitherto been considered the last political works of Defoe, before he retired finally to the pleasanter and quieter fields of general literature.

And this brings us to the accidental discovery in 1864, in the State Paper Office, of six previously unknown letters of Defoe, in his own handwriting, and undoubtedly genuine, addressed to Charles De la Faye, Esq., private secretary to the Lords Justices of Ireland in 1715, and confidential secretary to the Secretary of State in 1718. These letters range from the 12th of April to the 13th of June, 1718, and prove, on the decisive testimony of Defoe himself, that he was once more taken into the secret service of the government; that he again received a salary, or as he calls it "capitulations;" and that his pen, so far from being quiescent on party and political topics, and so wholly engrossed with fiction and general literature as had hitherto been supposed, was as active as ever on all the party polemics of his day. Not, it would appear, without the suspicion of his contemporaries.

It were to be wished that the service had been as honourable as the mission he had undertaken for the ministers of William the Third and Queen Anne; and that a man of such high character had not towards the close of his career done evil that good might come. Defoe himself explains his task to Mr. De la Faye in the second letter of the series. "My Lord Sunderland, to whose goodness I had many years ago been obliged, when I was in a secret commission sent to Scotland, was pleased to approve and continue this service and the appointment annexed; and with his lordship's approbation I introduced myself in the disguise of a translator of the foreign news, to be so far concerned in this weekly paper of Mist's, as to be able to keep it within the circle of a secret management, also to prevent the mysterious part of it, and yet neither Mist, nor any of those concerned with him to have the least guess or suspicion by whose direction I do it." And Defoe, the Whig par excellence, not only committed this deception upon Mist, the proprietor of the leading Tory and Jacobite paper of the day, but upon the proprietors of two other Tory papers, equally unsuspicuous of treachery, Dormer's News Letter and the Mercurius Politicus. "Upon the whole, however," adds Defoe in the same confidential letter to Mr. De la Faye, so unexpectedly brought to light; "this is the consequence, that by this management the Weekly Journal (Mist's), and

Dormer's Letter, as also the *Mercurius Politicus*, which is in the same nature of management as the Journal, will always be kept, mistakes excepted, to pass as Tory papers; and yet be disabled and enervated so as to do no mischief, or give no offence to the government." . . . "I am posted for this service, among Papists, Jacobites, and enraged high Tories;—a generation, who I confess, my very soul abhors; I am obliged to hear traitorous expressions and outrageous words against his majesty's person and government, and his most faithful servants; and smile at all as if I approved it. I am obliged to father all the scandalous and indeed villainous papers that come, and keep them by me as if I would gather materials from them to put them into the News; nay, I often venture to let things pass which are a little shocking, that I may not render myself suspected. Thus I bow in the house of Rimon, and most heartily recommend myself to his lordship's protection; as I may be undone the sooner, by how much the more faithfully I execute the commands I am under."

This service was so base toward the newspaper proprietors and the political party deceived, and was so unworthy of Defoe, as to have induced most people when the letters were discovered to indulge in the hope, that the letters might be forgeries. It is not so, however. The suspicion is baseless, the hope is fallacious, and the great Daniel Defoe did really act the unworthy part he describes, and did really sell the birthright of his personal honour for a mess of very dirty pottage. Mr. Lee, who looks with a kindly eye, and bears with a lenient hand, even upon this aberration from the line of strict moral rectitude on the part of his favourite author, employed himself very earnestly and assiduously for eighteen months on the track thus opened out, to discover the contributions of Defoe to the political literature of the fifteen last years of his life. The gatherings he has thus made, fill two large octavo volumes of nine hundred and ninety pages. Some of these are doubtless the work of Defoe's hand; but as Mr. Lee had no other clue for his guidance than that afforded by the letters to Mr. De la Faye—and as he can only judge by his own construction of the internal evidence of style, that they were written by Defoe in the various periodicals with which he is thus known to have been connected, it is very possible that he may have included many ar-

ticles and papers which belong to a meaner parentage. At all events, they can by no means be unequivocally accepted as the mintage of Defoe's brain, though presenting more or less similarity in tone, manner, and style, to hundreds of others which are known to be his. Whether his or not, these waifs and strays of a bygone time form a valuable seed-ground of history, and cannot be overlooked by any historian who would follow up the work begun by Macaulay, and give the world a true account of the troublous times between the Revolution of 1688 and the last disappearance of the Stuarts from the scene of British politics.

There were obscure passages in the history of the latter years of Defoe, which the discovery of these six letters helps materially to elucidate. Though Defoe had been really the good genius of Mist, and, by his suppression of treasonable articles intended for his journal, had saved him from imprisonment, the pillory, if not death upon the scaffold, Mist, when he became aware, after seven years, of the real position which Defoe occupied in his publishing office, and of the personal as well as party treachery involved, sought Defoe's life, and made a violent attack upon him with the sword: which Defoe repelled. At least, Mr. Lee, citing Defoe's own words, makes out a very good case for this supposition. And at the last, when Defoe's life-long fight was well nigh fought out, he was either threatened by Mist, or supposed himself to be threatened by Mist, to such an extent as to cause him to lose the balance of his mind. The fact of a persecution, real or imaginary, which embittered the close of his life, and sent him sorrowfully to the grave at the age of seventy-one, rests entirely upon a letter of Defoe to his son-in-law, Henry Baker, written on the 12th of August, 1730, after he had fled from his home, and hidden himself from his family. "My mind," he said, "is sinking under the weight of an affliction too heavy for my strength, and I look upon myself as abandoned of every comfort, every friend, and every relative, except such only as are able to give me assistance. . . . I am sorry to open my grief so far as to tell her" (his daughter Sophie, married to Mr. Baker) "it is *not* the blow which I received from a wicked, perfidious, and contemptible enemy that has broken in upon my spirit, which, as she well knows, has carried me through greater disasters than these. But it has been the injustice, unkindness, and, I must say, the

inhuman dealing of my own son, which has both ruined my family, and, in a word, has broken my heart." It does not appear that this heavy charge against his son was other than the hallucination of a diseased mind, for Defoe had amply provided for his wife and two daughters, and his son had not the power, even if he had the will, which nowhere appears, to ruin either them or his father. "I depended upon him," adds Defoe; "I trusted him; I gave up two dear unprovided children into his hands; but he has no compassion, but suffers them and their poor dying mother to beg their bread at his door, and to crave, as it were, an alms, which he is bound under hand and seal, besides the most sacred promises, to supply them with, himself at the same time being in a profusion of plenty. It is too much for me. My heart is too full." This would be very tragical if true. It is equally tragic if it be the mere phantasm of a strong mind weakened by old age, hard work, and disappointment. Mr. Lee conjectures, and probably with reason, that "the mean, contemptible, and perjured enemy" who sent Defoe's poor brain wrong was no other than Mist, whom he had deceived and betrayed; and that in alarm, well or ill-founded, at something terrible which Mist might do to him, he had made over all his property to his son. However this be, Defoe never returned home to the wife and children whom he loved, but fled from corner to corner, hiding himself from the world during several months.

He at last returned to London early in 1731, and, on the 26th of April in that year, died, in his seventy-first year, "of a lethargy," at a lodging in Ropemaker's-alley, Moorfields. It does not appear that his eyes were closed by filial hands, or that his family were able to discover him. The brain had given way, the strong intellect had worn itself out, and he died the victim of his own delusions, knowing not of the kind hearts that were yearning to receive him, and pay the last attention to a beloved husband and father.

Peace to his memory! He was not the faultless monster whom the world never saw, nor was he the first man who did evil that good might come of it, and who paid the penalty always exacted, sooner or later, from the evil-doer. Let him who is without sin cast the first stone at his memory, and let those who are not without sin, and know how to make allowances for human frailty, speak with respect of the great Daniel Defoe: who sinned a little, but suf-

fered much, and left behind him a name as a statesman, a patriot, a philosopher, and a novelist, that shall last as long as the English language.

THE PLAGUE AT EYAM.

In August, sixteen 'sixty-five, the wakes were, according to old custom, celebrated at Eyam, in Derbyshire, on the Sunday after St. Helen's Day. It is said that on this occasion an unusual number of visitors attended the wakes.

The plague was raging in London when, on the second or third of September following the wakes, a box, containing patterns of cloth and some clothes, was received by the tailor of Eyam from a relation in town, who had got them very cheap, and sent the bargain on; though men well understood the danger from contact with clothes, bedding, or furniture from infected houses. The journeyman of the tailor was one George Vicars, not a native of Eyam. It was he who opened the box, and, it would seem, in taking out the patterns and clothes, he at once observed a peculiar smell; for, exclaiming "How very damp they are!" he hung them before the fire to dry. Even while attending to them a violent sickness seized him, and, other serious symptoms following, the family and neighbours were greatly alarmed. Next day he was much worse, and became delirious. Large swellings rose on his neck and groin; on the third day the fatal plague spot appeared on his breast, and on the following night, September 6th, he died in horrible agony.

Thus began the plague at Eyam: a place now of seventeen hundred, then of three hundred and fifty, inhabitants. With some the first symptoms would be so slight that the earlier stages were endured without suspicion, and they would go about as usual, until a sudden faintness seized them, and the dark token on the breast appeared.

The second victim at Eyam was Edward, son of Edward Cooper, who died fourteen days after George Vicars, and by the end of September six others were dead of plague; two of these were named Thorpe, and, as four more of the same name were carried off in October, it is likely that this was the name of the tailor to whom the cloth was sent: it being stated that his whole family were among the first destroyed. Twenty-three persons died in October. The approach of winter checked the pestilence, and the register shows but seven deaths in November. In December, there were nine; in January, five; in March, six; in April, nine; in May, four. But, then, with the increase of heat came rapid increase of mortality. In June, nineteen died; in July, fifty-six; in August, seventy-eight; in September, twenty-four; in October, twenty, in which month the plague was stayed. Adding these numbers together, we find a total of two hundred and seventy-three deaths registered in rather more than a year from a population of three hundred

and fifty. Eight of these are said to have been deaths from other causes, leaving two hundred and sixty-five as the number destroyed by the plague.

The clergyman of the parish was the Reverend William Mompesson. It was early in June when his wife, a young, beautiful, and delicate woman, threw herself at his feet with their two little children of the ages of three and four, imploring him to depart with them from the devoted village. He was deeply moved by her appeal, but firmly withheld it. He positively refused to quit Eyam; showing his wife that duty to his flock forbade his desertion of it in the hour of danger; and that the providence of God had placed him there to counsel, strengthen, and comfort his people. But at the same time he urged her to fly with the children. This she refused to do, pleading fulfilment of her marriage vow in abiding with him for better and for worse, in sickness or health. It was finally agreed to send the children away to a relative in Yorkshire.

The mortality of Eyam has no parallel in the history of the plague. It has been naturally supposed that ill treatment of the disorder through the ignorance and poverty of the people, and some peculiarly unwholesome local circumstances, caused the unheard-of havoc. There is little doubt that one reason was the resolve of many people living close together not to fly from the infected spot. At the time of the appearance of the pest the more wealthy inhabitants left, and some erected solitary huts in the valleys and on the hills, where they lived out the season of danger in strict seclusion. These separated themselves from the rest before any taint had reached them.

When the fearful advance in June aroused the keenest dread the people were disposed to fly the place. It was then that their pastor energetically set himself against their purpose. He showed them the frightful consequences their flight would bring on the surrounding villages. He told them how surely disease was already at work with many among them, lying invisible in their bodies and clothes; he warned them against the guilt of carrying the plague far and wide; and he prevailed with them to lessen their own hope of safety in consideration for the lives of others. On his part, Mompesson promised to remain with them, and do all in his power to help and guide them. Associated with him in his labours, we find another clergyman named Stanley, then living at Eyam, who shared the danger and the toil of the time. These two arranged a plan. Mompesson wrote a letter to the Duke of Devonshire, then at Chatsworth (five miles from Eyam) telling him that if they could depend on adequate supplies of necessaries, he had little doubt of prevailing with the people to remain in the village. The prompt reply was an expression of deep sympathy, and a promise that supplies should be provided. Mompesson and Stanley then fixed upon certain points at which such supplies should be left. A well or rivulet to the north of Eyam, still called "Mompesson's well," was

one of these. Another was at the cliff between Eyam and Stony Middleton, where stood a large stone trough: one of many to be found on the waysides of Derbyshire, into which little rills trickle for the refreshment of travellers and their cattle on the steep roads. These places were chosen as convenient for purification of money left by the villagers for special purchases: lest infection should be passed with it from hand to hand. Here, very early in the morning, supplies were left, which were fetched by persons whom Mompesson and Stanley appointed for the purpose. And here would be left the record of deaths, with other information for the world outside Eyam.

A line was drawn around the village, marked by well-known stones and fences; and it was agreed upon by all within it that the boundary should not be overstepped. No need to caution those beyond it! The fear of entering Eyam was general, and its inhabitants were left to meet their enemy alone.

Towards the end of June the plague increased, the passing bell ceased, the churchyard was no longer used for interment, the church doors were closed. Mompesson proposed to his daily-diminishing flock to meet on the border of a secluded dingle called "the Delf." There, he read prayers twice a week, and preached on Sundays, under a beautiful natural archway of grey rock, which is still called "Mompesson's pulpit," or "Cuckleth Church." His hearers seated themselves apart from one another, on the grassy slope before him. July came. Funeral rites were suspended, and the dead were buried, as soon as life had departed, by the hands of the survivors of the household, if any remained. Coffins and shrouds were no longer provided. An old door or chair would serve as a bier, and a shallow grave in a near field or garden would receive the corpse. Some were buried close to the doors, and some, it is affirmed, in the back part of the houses in which they died. Day saw dead bodies hurried along the village; night heard the frequent footsteps of those who bore them out. During July and August, dead and dying were in the same houses, dreadful wailings were heard on every side; on every face was seen unutterable grief. So long as any remained of a household it was difficult to find neighbours who would touch or bury its dead; but when the last of a household died, or there were none but dying in the house beside the dead, it was needful that some stranger should undertake the dangerous office.

Marshall Howe, a native of Eyam, now stood forward. He was a man of undaunted courage and gigantic stature. His name yet survives in Eyam. He had taken the distemper and recovered from it soon after its first appearance at Eyam, and to the belief that no one was liable to a second attack may be ascribed much of his intrepidity. Covetousness also greatly influenced him; he received money from the kindred of those he interred, and when he buried the last of a plague-destroyed household he claimed all that was in the cottage. When

he heard of one dying, or dead, for whose interment there was no relative left to provide, he would hasten to a neighbouring garden or field, open a grave, and then, tying a cord round the yet warm corpse, throw the other end over his shoulder, and drag it to the hole he had made.

The boundary line was generally well observed, but a few instances in which it was broken are on record. One person who crossed it from without, was a young woman from Corbor, two miles distant, who had married from Eyam just before the breaking out of the plague, leaving a mother there. Moved by anxiety, the daughter, unknown to her husband, went to visit her mother, and found the poor woman attacked by the disorder. Greatly terrified, she returned home, and on the following night was taken ill. Her husband and neighbours, learning where she had been, were nearly frantic with terror. On the next day she grew worse, and before night every symptom of the pest was manifest, and she died on this second day of her illness. Strange to say, no one was infected by her. Another who crossed the line from without, was a man living at Bubnall, near Chatsworth. His employment was carrying wood from the Chatsworth woods to the neighbouring villages. Against advice and entreaty, he insisted upon going, as usual, through Eyam. The day was wet and boisterous; he could get no one to help him unload his cart; he caught a severe cold; and shortly after returning was attacked with fever. So great was the alarm in Bubnall, that a man was set to watch his house, and the neighbours declared they would shoot him if he attempted to leave it. The Duke of Devonshire interfered to remove their alarm; he sent his doctor to make due inquiry, but the doctor would not go near the man. He took his station on one side the river Derwent, and spoke across the river to his patient on the other bank. The man had simply caught a cold, and was by this time better. It is evident, from several records, that strict watch was kept on some of the roads leading from Eyam. Thus, in the constables' account at Sheffield is an entry of charges "for those who kept the people of Eyam from Hullwood Springs" (ten miles from Eyam) "the time the plague was there." On the road between Tideswell and Eyam, a watch was set to prevent any person from Eyam entering the town on any pretext whatever. A poor woman, living in a part of Eyam called Orchard Bank, impelled by some pressing need, made her way to Tideswell one market day. She was duly stopped by the watch, and thus questioned: "Whence comest thou?" Fearing to say from Eyam, she replied, "From Orchard Bank." "Where is that?" asked the man. "Why, verily," answered she, being a wary woman, "in the land of the living." She was suffered by the watch to pass, and hastened to the market. There, some person soon recognised her, and, raising the cry, "The plague! the plague! a woman from Eyam! the plague! the plague! a woman

from Eyam!" the words resounded from all sides, and the poor frightened creature fled: a crowd gathering behind her, who, with shouts, stones, and sods, hunted her as they would have hunted a mad dog, for a full mile out of Tideswell. It is also told that, fuel being scarce at Eyam, some men attempted to get coal from some coal-pits beyond the line; but, imprudently telling whence they came, were driven off.

Eyam is divided east and west by a small stream, which crosses its street underground. The eastern side was the part visited so fearfully; the dwellers on the western side were but few, and those shut themselves up very closely, avoiding all intercourse with the other bank. It was towards the latter end of August, that a man living in this healthy portion heard by chance, late in the evening, that a dear sister of his, who lived in the eastern part, was taken with plague. Unknown to his family, he rose very early next day, determined to visit her. In great anxiety, he traversed the silent street, and reached her cottage. The door opened at a touch; the place was empty. His sister had died the preceding night, Marshall Howe had buried her in the adjoining garden, and rifled the house long before break of day. Full of grief, the man returned home, but not alone. The plague went with him, and he, and all his family, were, in a few days, laid in their graves.

The Reverend Thomas Stanley, one of the two ministering clergymen, had been for a short time rector of Eyam, but from some scruple of conscience had left its ministry, and resigned the living in 1662; but he continued to reside in Eyam until his death in 1670, serving his people still, and greatly beloved by them. His memory is still green in Eyam, where he is spoken of as the "great, good man." The house in which he lived was known as long as it stood, by the name of "Stanley's House." Mompesson had been inducted to Eyam only one year previous to its visitation; and the power he acquired over the wills and minds of his people would be inexplicable did we not remember that the loved and long-known Stanley was there to second every suggestion.

Mompesson was not a strong man, but he retained health during the whole of this trying time, though he was unremitting in visiting from house to house. Mrs. Mompesson is said to have been exceedingly beautiful and amiable, but of very delicate health, with consumption in her family. In the spring of the year her lungs had appeared affected, and Mompesson walked each morning, with her on his arm, in the fields contiguous to the rectory, in the hope that she would regain strength by this gentle exercise. On the morning of the 22nd of August they had walked together as usual, and she had been conversing with him on the accustomed theme of their absent children, when she suddenly exclaimed, "Oh, the air, how sweet it smells!" It is said that those words fell with leaden weight on Mompesson's

heart; but why he was so oppressed by them, is not stated. We can only conjecture that they revealed to him some secret of the plague, which long and intimate acquaintance with its workings had led him correctly to interpret. The fears the words aroused, were painfully realised in a few hours. She had indeed taken the plague; the worst symptoms were speedily shown, and before night no hope remained. She struggled till the 24th, and then died in the twenty-seventh year of her age.

We are told that those who were left at Eyam nearly forgot their own griefs and fears in sorrow for the death of Mrs. Mompesson, and in pity for her husband. Doubtless it was more as a legacy to his children, than as a document fitting their tender years, that Mompesson penned an affectionate letter to them concerning the loss of their mother; and at the same time he wrote to the patron of the living, Sir George Saville, clearly stating his expectation of his own immediate death.

About a mile east of Eyam, Riley-hill commands a lovely prospect; it is swept by the freshest breezes, and, being so far distant from Eyam, it might be thought would have escaped unscathed. How the plague was brought there, to the house of a family of Talbots, early in July, is not recorded. But a house still stands on the spot occupied by that in which these Talbots lived, and in the orchard belonging to it may be seen an old monument inscribed to the memories of Richard Talbot, Catherine his wife, two sons, and three daughters, buried July, 1666. There was but one other house then on the hill; it was occupied by a family named Hancock. If, as we suppose, the last burial at the Talbots was performed by the Hancocks, it is likely that the father and his son John gave their hands to the task, for we find the son John, and his sister Elizabeth, dying three days after the last grave of the Talbots was closed, and learn that they were buried by their unhappy mother. This seems to point at the serious illness of the father, whose death is, in fact, registered as occurring, four days later, on the 7th of August, with those of the two other sons living at home. Two more short days, and Alice died; one day more, and the wretched mother dug the grave of Ann, the last daughter. Between the 3rd and the 10th of August this poor woman lost her husband and five children, and buried them all with her own hand, side by side, a very little way from her own door. Fearing to touch the corpses, she tied to the feet of each, a towel, and so dragged the bodies in succession to their graves. The poor woman fled from her home to a surviving son at Sheffield, with whom she passed the sad remainder of her days. The graves are still there, with their memorial stones, placed by the surviving son.

Now there remained but a hundred and forty-nine persons in Eyam. September was unusually hot, and still the plague raged. A year had gone by since its first appearance in the village. The season for the wakes had come

again, and passed uncelebrated. Twenty-four died this month, of the one hundred and forty-nine. One of these was a little maid named Mary Darby, who died September 4th. She had lost her father by the plague on July 4th, and he was buried in the field in which their dwelling stood. Here she was gathering daisies from the grave when the pest seized her; on the following day she was laid under the daisies, by her father's side. Two stones with their respective names mark the spot. Margaret Blackwell, aged seventeen, had lost all her family by the plague except one brother, when she herself was attacked by it. Her brother was obliged to leave her in extremity in order to fetch coals, and before quitting the house cooked himself some bacon. He then went out, feeling assured that he would find her dead on his return. Margaret, suffering from excessive thirst, contrived to leave her bed to get something to drink, and, seeing in a basin the warm fat of the bacon which had so recently been fried, she hastily seized it, in the belief that it was water, and drank it off. Returning then to bed, she felt rather better, and, when her brother came back he found her, to his great surprise, revived. Eventually she recovered, and lived to a good old age to tell the story of the plague at Eyam.

There were no fresh cases after the 11th of October. The plague at last left Eyam, after a sojourn there of rather more than thirteen months. One of the fugitives, named Merrill, of Hollins House, Eyam, lived in a hut near the top of a hill called "Sir William," whither he had carried a cock to be his sole companion. He would often go to a certain point on the hill, from which he could overlook the fated village, and mark the number of graves increasing in the fields around. One day, at the time the plague ceased, his companion, the cock, after strutting about the heath for some time, rose from the ground, and, flapping his wings, flew straight away to his old quarters at Hollins House. Merrill waited a day or two, and then, interpreting the cock's desertion, by the story of Noah's bird, concluded that the plague, like the waters of the Deluge, had "abated." So he also descended to his old home, where he and the cock lived some years longer together.

WITHERED BLOSSOM.

IN TWO CHAPTERS. CHAPTER I.

So long as Lucy lived, so long did her children in the nursery live glad and happy lives. Every evening before the six o'clock dinner, she ran up to the nursery, sat down on the little low blue chair—mamma's chair—and gathered the children around her. The three-year-old baby on her lap, the eldest little girl beside her, lost in admiration of the shining jewels on mamma's pretty hands. When the children grew up and had lost her, they could just remember the scene. The warm bright nursery, the gay childish pictures pinned

upon the walls, the nursery tea-table. And over and above all, beyond the bread and butter, beyond the white mugs, "A present from Bognor," "A present from the Isle of Wight," there rose up the mother. The pure sweet face, the low black dress, the pretty white neck with its shining white cross. Like a ministering angel she lived with them, helping and calming Belle, petting and hushing her baby Eunice. At length there came a time when mamma's pretty neck was always covered with a shawl, and the fingers that were so clever in mending all the toys, grew almost as helpless as those of little Belle. Then a shade upon the house, darkening blinds, the passionate unbelieving grief of the children, and a blank.

They grew up quick, fanciful, morbid. Quick, in their almost instinctive faculty for reading other people's thoughts and guessing at their motives. Fanciful, so that their caprices were endless, their likes and dislikes without number, and morbid to an extent that would have almost broken their poor mother's heart had she known it. For instance, the one lamp in the long ill-lighted street was opposite their house, and, of course, throughout the long dreary winters threw a weird sort of radiance on the puddles, and the children in the nursery would sob and cry, taking it as an omen of long, cheerless lives. They were imaginative children. Between every course there was played a story, when the silver fork Gabriel met his love Rosalie the spoon, at their rendezvous the mug. Every domino in the box had a name; every ball on the solitaire board; the hoops were princesses in disguise.

They were old-fashioned children in old-fashioned dress. They had curious long faces, with plaintive dissatisfied eyes, plaited hair tied at the sides with bows of brown ribbon, and voices alternately passionate and pettish.

So time led them from the nursery to the school-room.

Eunice and Belle had governess after governess, with whom they fought pitched battles and did very few lessons. Dreamy, obstinate, perverse, the children were most difficult to manage. They were quick at learning, with magnificent memories, which retained the smallest things with the clearness of a photograph; but they chose what they would learn, and it was very limited liability. They drew very well, and so worked hard at their drawing. They would sit for hours at the piano, com-

posing, and then singing, their songs. To a certain extent they were fond of their books—poetry, fiction, any touch of romance; no fact, nothing that had ever really happened, would they learn.

They were dreadful children to argue, requiring everything proved to them, and, unlike children, were hard and exacting; but there was a fascination about them in spite of it all.

Their loyalty to each other, which, when one incurred punishment, caused the other instantly to share it by committing the same fault; their love of the beautiful, amounting almost to a worship; their intolerance of slander; their dislike of gossip; their invariable siding with the weak; and, above all, their faithful clinging to their dead mother's memory; were very noticeable traits in them.

But they led wretched lives.

Their father did not choose, but accepted the first governesses that presented themselves. Gaunt, time-serving, ignorant women, who first bullied and then toadied the children; and on both these points the little judges were merciless.

Eunice and Belle behaved as if they were devoid of all conscience or feeling. They delighted in nothing so much as exasperating their governess until she lost her temper, and then keeping their own: studiously every day giving as much trouble as possible, and overwhelming themselves with self-reproach at night.

Lessons over, they would spend long hours in composing anthems, and sketching plain faces with plenty of character. Their greatest pleasure was analysing themselves, and it was very bad for them. They treated their sense of the ludicrous to a representation of their own peculiarities, and so greatly encouraged both, becoming each day more hopelessly self-concentrated.

So they passed into womanhood, and the years wrought marvels.

Their appearance was now very good. Their figures were magnificent, and their faces, though still peculiar, very handsome; with complexions of a cream white, capable of dark flushing, and eyes long and dreamy. They were immensely admired for their good looks, quaintness, and the fascination that had grown with them.

It is here my story begins.

I first made their acquaintance in a large old country house down in Devonshire, where we were all staying. They arrived late one afternoon in dark travelling cloaks, and veils on their hats, so that I did not see them till they entered the long low

drawing-room dressed for dinner. Then, the simplicity of their white untrimmed muslins particularly pleased me. Judging them from it, I held them to be quiet, simple girls: though I have no doubt now, they were perfectly aware that their pliant figures, cream-tinted faces, and dark coiled hair, were so shown off to advantage.

The girls took to me directly, and so far as I could see, to no one else. Originally, I suppose, they were attracted to me by pity, seeing me an invalid, middle aged, and plain. But afterwards I fancy they liked dropping down on the floor, and telling me all that went on in that large house.

They had just returned from Paris, I found; indeed, they seemed to travel continually.

The fact was, they were so quick in foreseeing the effect of their words and actions, that though by no means naturally sociable, they had made a large quantity, not perhaps of true steady-going friends, but desirable acquaintances—I use the word from their point of view—who took them to Paris, gave them a London season, or, as in this instance, brought them to spend the autumn in their country house. They much preferred, I fancy, being together, but for all that, they not unfrequently separated, one going east, while the other went west. Besides their two faces, there was one other face at our pleasant dining-table in which I took an interest. It belonged to a Captain Frogmore: a large, healthy-looking man, with a loud voice, who was home on sick leave, he told us, and who roared when we doubted the sickness. He admired the simple muslin dresses to the full as much as I did, and, in his heavy way, danced a devoted attendance on them. The girls were so alike both in appearance and character, that I scarcely wondered he should distribute his attentions equally, even to the extent of seeming indifferent as to which he should ultimately make Mrs. Frogmore.

I was not uneasy about it, for Eunice and Belle were not responsive, taking his admiration simply, as a matter of course, very much as if they were princesses of the blood, clearly showing, however, that they liked it, and would have been displeased had it been withdrawn.

But it was not possible that for very long Captain Frogmore should go on showing no preference; the girls themselves helped him to a decision. His attentions increasing, they began to bore Belle, while Eunice still took them in good part. This being the case, Captain Frogmore's attentions rapidly

ran in one direction, so that while Eunice had less and less time to set aside from flirtation, Belle's whole day was now at her own disposal, and so I saw more of her.

I think of the two I liked Eunice the better, not from any special good point in her, but negatively, because she was perhaps just a shade less morbid, non-practical, self-concentrated than her sister; but despite myself there was every little while some look in Belle's eyes that banished the headstrong, self-opiniated girl, and conjured up before me the nursery picture they were so fond of describing. I saw as in some old dream the dead mother alive, the children around her, and this girl Belle, innocently happy, with an untroudden life stretching before her; and the rush of love to my heart, arose from sheer pity. Knowing her, how could I even hope that her life would be smooth?

For, so far as I understood it, their story ran thus. Their father, never a very virtuous character, was now rapidly drinking himself into his grave, and the girls, at his death, would have nothing—from him, that is. An old maiden aunt had bequeathed a small fortune to Eunice as her god-daughter, completely passing over poor Belle. Eunice would have liked nothing better than to share it; but no talking, no arguments, could bring this to pass; Belle always returned the same answer. She would accept her life from no one, not even her sister. When, therefore, their present income should cease, Eunice might do what she would with her money; Belle was going out as a governess. I believed her implicitly. To be obstinate came as naturally to Belle as yielding might come to another. The idea haunted me. That original little governess! I saw her in the school-room teaching commonplace children the exact things *she* had liked, bewildered at dulness, getting morbid and distressed. I saw her in the drawing-room pale and unhappy, not courting, but repelling attention with proud eyes and an unconciliating voice; defiance even in the erectness of her attitude. I confessed to myself sadly that I could not see the end. Marriage would have solved the difficulty, but after a certain time every one she knew bored Belle, and, under these circumstances, marriage might have been dangerous. Just now, however, the days were passing pleasantly, and on the unquiet sea of their troubled lives the girls were resting on their oars, when there came a change that broke it all up. Shall I ever forget that evening?

The gentlemen were out on the verandah, away down the garden, or on the far-off

terrace, smoking their cigars, the red light showing prettily in the distance ; we ladies were amusing ourselves in their absence.

Our hostess and another lady were matching wools by lamplight ; but the glare hurt my eyes, and my couch was wheeled to the far window. There the moonlight coming in showed Eunice dreamily playing a sad old German waltz, and Belle on the ottoman beside me, discussing a drawing.

A grey stone wall, the height of the picture, and the insects in the crevices, brown and very hideous, were really beautifully done, and some so minute as almost to require a microscope.

It was very clever, and I told her so ; but I thought the subject unfortunate, and it was this she was contesting. She was so vehement that I grew tired of her, and began to listen to the voices at the centre table. My hostess was saying,

"I am expecting a visitor to arrive tonight. He should be almost here now, I think—"

"Mr. Curzon," said the servant, as Mr. Curzon, passing him, walked into the room. A remarkably slight man, fair-haired, with cold blue eyes, and a good carriage.

This I saw on the instant, and also that Belle had started from her seat, with her breath coming quickly in little gasps.

"What, Jack ! You know Belle?" cries our hostess, surprised at her manner.

"Yes ; I know Miss Belle," says Jack, tenderly, and he took her hand and held it.

And then there was a pause, which I felt by instinct Belle could never break.

Our hostess comes to the rescue.

"Well, Jack, manners. Do not you know Eunice ?"

Jack turns and bows towards the piano.

"No ; I have not that pleasure. You must introduce me."

We chat and talk through the evening. Belle has met this Mr. Curzon away on some visit, and they seem to be pretty well acquainted.

When we make a move for bed, and come towards the light, Belle is crimson with excitement, and there is enchantment in her eyes. The hand that takes up the bedroom lamp trembles ; and do what she will, her lips quiver. Some of the gentlemen coming in now, our hostess gives them Curzon in charge.

"Good-night, gentlemen !" she says, cheerily. "You may take back another recruit to your smoking."

Most of them are off to the billiard-room, and have had enough of smoking ; but not Frogmore. This last feature is never ap-

parent in Frogmore. Curzon and he go off together. The verandah, where they smoke, is under my bedroom, and their words come up to me through the open window.

They are talking of the girls, their quaintness and beauty. Frogmore is descanting on Eunice's generosity.

"She would have shared it all. Generous of her, wasn't it ?"

"Charming," Curzon says, but his tone is careless, as though he were not attending.

Presently, their talk grew more private ; I shut the window and retired.

The next morning, on going down-stairs, I found the whole party assembled in the breakfast-room, our pleasure-loving hostess gaily planning out the day. We were to take our dinner to an old ruin that we knew ; and we were all to put on our oldest clothes. I laughed with the girls about their oldest clothes ; they who were always so daintily fresh !

We drove on the side of the cliff, and the view the whole way was like one of Hook's pictures. Sharp, jagged rocks in a green sea ; white, foaming waves coming crashing against them. The crispness upon everything was a sort of champagne to us.

Eunice and Frogmore were in the rumble of one carriage ; Curzon and Belle were in the rumble of the other. Our hostess, I saw, thought she had arranged us all cleverly.

I was in the carriage whose rumble held Belle, and I noticed how the old dreaminess had vanished from her eyes, and how contented and happy they looked.

Every now and then I caught her fresh voice, but oftener she spoke in a whisper. Whenever I turned, I saw her face changing, and there seemed to be no limit to her companion's admiration. I fully believed I was spectator at a love-scene, and when we reached the ruins, I let them ramble off together. Very soon the whole party was scattered, and as I sat on the rocks on the shelving beach, the prettiest visions began to float towards me. My eyes saw everything couleur de rose ; the far-off future grew fair and bright ; vaguely, what I wished seemed coming to pass. It was the old thing after all, that I wished ; the realisation of the old jingling rhyme,

Jack shall have Jill,
Nought shall go ill.

"Mrs. F.," said Frogmore, coming up towards me, "I don't care for the ruins. May I sit on these rocks and have a talk with you ?"

"As you like, Captain Frogmore," said I. But there was nothing in my manner that encouraged him, for we sat on our re-

spective rocks in utter silence. At last he said in his abrupt matter-of-fact way :

" You see a good deal of those girls, Mrs. F., and know all their ways. Eunice, for instance. I want her to marry me : now, before I ask her, do you think I have much chance ? "

I was not surprised, but I was very, very glad, and my answer was ready. I recalled a thousand instances where Eunice had seemed to flush at his approach, and where her shafts of ridicule had passed by his name.

" I do think so, Captain Frogmore," said I, and then the whole world grew bright for him too. The visions that had been only for my eyes, floated and danced before his. There were little pools of green water all around us, and I knew how lovely were the pictures he saw shadowed forth in their depths. The dust on the air was pure gold, and it went blinding into his eyes, and settling round his heart.

" Faith, Love, and Trust," sang the birds, and woke up the echoes in the place. Ah me, it is but touch and go with visions ! Suddenly, with a rush they were all gone, and in their stead was Eunice, pouting her lips, and making objections to everything.

" Take our dinner on the rocks ! But that will be very horrid, Captain Frogmore. No, I don't at all know how we're going home. One can't settle everything in a moment."

Then the others came up, Curzon looking very quiet and gentlemanly in his sea-side get-up, with the white gauze veil round his hat, readjusted, I saw, by feminine fingers, and Belle, handsomer than I had ever seen her, with a warm dark flush on her face, and clematis in her jacket.

" Dear Mrs. F.," she said, sinking down beside me, " what a day ! Mrs. F., I should like this to last always."

Yes, it was Belle who said that—the would-be instructress of extreme youth. The incompatibility of the whole thing began to press upon me. We had the brightest little picnic imaginable. The girls sang to us. Gay little songs, made up of their own words to their own music, but with strange, ringing changes that stirred my heart to its depths.

" Sit still, Belle," said Eunice, " and I will draw you. You have fallen into a good position ; the sun is on your flowers. How I wish I had colours here ! "

" Challenged ! " said Curzon. " I will draw your sister."

They both set to work, but Curzon got on slowly, from looking too much at the model.

When the sketches were done, Eunice's was very much the better, but Curzon had caught the dreamy wistful look in Belle's eyes.

" You have done it before ! " cried Eunice. " Belle's face is very difficult to draw. I was months before I could do it."

Curzon did not answer her.

" Jack is so clever," said our hostess aside to me ; she was pleased at the success of her day, and her kind-hearted plans. " He can do everything, and he is so lovable."

Somehow, in spite of the way they had come, going home the young ones managed a different arrangement. Eunice was in her seat somewhat before the others, and I myself saw Curzon go up to her, and heard him say : " Won't you let me go back with you ? Do I ? "

Eunice smiled assent, there was perhaps nothing else left her to do ; but Frogmore looked supremely disgusted, as he took up his seat by Belle. They looked so dissatisfied and cross, sitting there side by side, that I could not make up my mind to spoil my drive by going with them, and I took refuge with Eunice.

It certainly was as our hostess had said. Jack was very clever. I had not noticed it so much when he had been with Belle. Eunice was flattered by this new division of forces and Mr. Curzon's unexpected attention. She did not, perhaps, observe, as I did, that no matter how he talked, or to whom he talked, his glances went straight through the gathering gloom over to Belle.

" Well, we have had a delightful day," said Eunice at length, when we alighted ; " have we not, Belle ? "

But Belle had gone stone deaf with one ear, and that was the ear nearest her sister.

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